2025

Report on Compliance with Court-Ordered Requirements

SNAP/APA

STATE OF ALASKA, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

JUNE 1, 2025

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I. Introduction

This report provides the Court with the State of Alaska, Department of Health's June 2025 update on compliance with court-ordered requirements related to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Adult Public Assistance (APA). It reflects the Division of Public Assistance's ongoing efforts to reduce delays and improve program administration through targeted staffing, technology enhancements, and process improvements.

Since the May report, the Division has completed a major training milestone for new staff, launched a leadership academy to strengthen supervisory capacity, and taken additional steps to streamline application processing. Progress continues across IT modernization projects and workload management strategies, reflecting a broader commitment to building sustainable infrastructure and capacity.

The Division remains responsive to federal oversight, engaged with stakeholders, and focused on delivering timely and accurate services to Alaskans. While challenges persist, the Division is actively aligning its operations with court-ordered expectations and federal standards.

II. Federal Correspondence and Oversight

The Alaska Department of Health and Division of Public Assistance continue to prioritize collaboration with federal partners and responsiveness to regulatory requirements. This month's federal correspondence reflects developments related to ongoing oversight on corrective action planning, eligibility verification, data access, client communication requirements, and program integrity.

In May 2025, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) formally approved Alaska's updated Recertification Processing Timeliness (RPT) Corrective Action Plan. The plan identifies two primary root causes for the RPT rate challenges: workforce shortages and reliance on outdated technology. It also outlines corrective actions including new hiring, automation, and workload redistribution. The state has committed to reaching an RPT rate of at least 33.68% within six months. The final plan, cover letter, and FNS response approving the consolidated CAP are included in Attachment 1.

Alaska also received detailed feedback from FNS on its FY2023 Quality Control (QC) Investment Plan. The state is now engaged in technical assistance with FNS and revising the plan in alignment with clarified federal standards. FNS requested additional details on cost estimates and further alignment of investment activities with identified error root causes. This correspondence and the state's response are included in Attachment 1.

FNS has reinforced expectations related to client notification requirements. In a May 8, 2025, communication, FNS clarified that verbal explanation of rights and responsibilities must be provided during SNAP interviews per 7 CFR § 273.2(e), including the requirement to report changes and comply with interim report deadlines. This guidance was provided in response to questions raised by Alaska regarding fair hearing outcomes related to interim report closures. The federal response emphasized that although states are not required to include rights and responsibilities language in approval notices, the verbal notification requirement remains in place and applies even if a waiver is no longer active.

Alaska also submitted SNAP disqualification and sanction data in response to an FNS data call, fulfilling a request tied to Executive Order 14243 and associated data sharing guidance. Due to legacy system limitations, sanction data was submitted as a snapshot with explanatory caveats. This correspondence and the dataset are included in Attachment 1.

Executive Order 14243 (March 20, 2025) and related USDA guidance (May 6, 2025) require states to eliminate data silos and authorize data transfers from EBT processors to USDA. Alaska is reviewing its internal data-sharing protocols in response to these requirements. The order and federal guidance are included in Attachment 1.

Additionally, under Executive Order 14218, USDA issued new guidance on April 24, 2025, outlining enhanced expectations for identity and immigration verification. This includes greater reliance on SAVE, stricter SSN validation, and clear documentation of citizenship prior to certification. This guidance is included in Attachment 1.

See Attachment 1:

- Cover Letter – Alaska SNAP Recertification CAP Submission (May 9, 2025)

- Final Corrective Action Plan – SNAP Recertification Timeliness (FY2025)

- FNS Response – Approval to Consolidate RPT and APT CAPs (April 10, 2025)

- FNS Feedback – Alaska SNAP QC Investment Plan (FY2023)

- SNAP Disqualification and Sanction Data Submission – Alaska (as of May 14, 2025)

- SNAP Disqualification and Sanction Data Snapshot – April 2025

- FNS Guidance on Verbal Notification Requirements (May 8, 2025)

- Executive Order 14243 – Eliminating Information Silos (March 20, 2025)

- FNS Data Sharing Guidance – Executive Order 14243 (May 6, 2025)
- FNS Enhanced Vetting Guidance – Executive Order 14218 (April 24, 2025)

III. Timely Processing of Applications

A. Workload Data

As of June 2025, the Division of Public Assistance reports 4,580 pending Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) applications and recertifications. This reflects a reduction of 760 cases from May 2025 total of 5,340. The decrease is the result of ongoing efforts to improve data integrity, expedite case resolution, and implement targeted strategies to address the aging caseload.

The oldest open SNAP case is dated May 20, 2024. This case had previously been resolved and was reopened for reconsideration. Accordingly, it was not reflected in prior reports and should not be interpreted as a newly delayed application.

The largest volume of pending cases now falls within the 61- to 90-day range, totaling 1,135. Additionally, 1,729 cases are more than 150 days old, which continues to necessitate targeted intervention. In April 2025, the Division implemented a focused staffing model that reassigned 30 staff to address untimely casework. Additional staff were dedicated to Virtual Contact Center operations, same-day lobby service, and timely non-lobby processing. These efforts were communicated to staff through a departmental memorandum, which emphasized stability, clarity of expectations, and the importance of aligning resources with service delivery demands (see Attachment A: Note from the Director).

To further support in-person access and efficient triage, the Division implemented a standardized tiered lobby service model. Under this model, all Division lobbies are

open to direct service Monday through Thursday. Clients are assessed and categorized into three tiers based on urgency. Tier 1 clients—those experiencing homelessness, urgent medical needs, or significant travel burden—receive priority for same-day service. Tiers 2 and 3 include clients with less urgent needs, such as pending applications or routine verifications. Real-time staffing adjustments and structured "blitz" periods ensure responsiveness during peak lobby hours.

The combined impact of these staffing adjustments and tiered client service protocols demonstrates the Division's proactive approach to backlog management and its commitment to timely, equitable service delivery. These efforts support compliance with court-ordered obligations and reinforce the Division's long-term goal of operational stability and improved client outcomes.

See Attachment 3:

- June 2025 Backlog Dashboard with Detail
- Note from Deb: Focused Work Assignments to Support Service and Stability

B.   IT Modernization

The Division of Public Assistance continues to advance a comprehensive IT modernization agenda focused on improving access to services, operational efficiency, and data integration. Since the last report, the Division has maintained momentum across key projects and implemented additional improvements to how this work is organized and reported. The June 2025 update includes continued progress across multiple modernization efforts and introduces a revised attachment format to improve readability and usability for the Court.

ILINX® Cognitive Services has entered the final testing phase. This tool converts Virtual Contact Center recordings into searchable transcripts and automatically extracts the federally required attestation segment. Once deployed, it will improve documentation accuracy and reduce staff workload by automating what is currently a manual verification process.

In support of workflow integration and improved staff efficiency, the Division is actively preparing to link ILINX® with the CURRENT™ workflow management system. This integration will enable data entered by eligibility staff to move directly between platforms, reducing redundancy and improving task management. Additional projects advancing this month include the Alaska Connect client portal, automated SMS and email notifications for client communications, and the continued development of digital workflows for long-term care document processing and centralized mail handling.

To improve transparency and usability for the Court, the Division has transitioned from a narrative project description to a structured modernization tracker. This format categorizes projects into completed, in progress, and planned, and includes concise information about the purpose, timeline, funding source, and program impact for each item. The updated tracker is designed to provide a high-level overview while preserving the detail needed for effective oversight.

These ongoing efforts are part of the Division's long-term strategy to modernize program administration, reduce barriers to access, and ensure compliance with state and federal requirements. Through expanded digital tools, system integration, and process automation, the Division is continuing to build a more accessible and resilient public assistance system.

See Attachment 4:

- Division of Public Assistance Technology Modernization Tracker – June 2025

- ImageSource Status Report – May 15, 2025

- June Technology Projects Roadmap

C.   Staffing Improvements

Overview of Staffing Improvements

The Division of Public Assistance continues to make steady progress in strengthening its workforce. Recent improvements include an increase in filled merit-based positions, streamlined recruitment efforts supported by hiring incentives, and strategic realignment of supervisory structures to enhance local responsiveness. Ongoing investments in training and leadership development are equipping staff at all levels with the tools needed to deliver accurate, timely public assistance services.

Merit-Based Workforce

The Division of Public Assistance continues to strengthen staffing strategies to address recruitment, retention, and workload capacity across its merit-based workforce. Between April and May 2025, the Division experienced a net increase in filled Eligibility Technician and Eligibility Office Manager positions, with several vacancies advancing through recruitment milestones such as interviewing and pending hire status. Fewer positions remain inactive compared to the prior reporting period, and a larger share of positions are now in later stages of recruitment. This progress is largely attributed to the continued use of hiring incentives for permanent Eligibility Technician 2 positions, which have increased applicant interest and shortened hiring timelines.

Additionally, the Division has implemented structural changes that improve oversight and local responsiveness. As previously reported, field office workload units are now aligned under office-based leadership instead of a centralized model. This realignment better reflects operational needs on the ground and supports more effective team supervision and integration.

The May personnel action data and staffing status reports (Attachments 5A and 5B) reflect the above progress and provide a breakdown of movements within the job classes from Eligibility Technician 1 through Eligibility Office Manager 2. The reports include new hires, promotions, separations, and in-division transfers. These materials illustrate the Division's active management of its staffing resources to meet operational and compliance needs.

See Attachment 5: Status of Eligibility Technician Positions

D.   Non-Merit Contract Staff

As of May 1, 2025, the Division maintains a non-merit workforce to support key operational areas. Contracted Eligibility Associates, supervisors, trainers, and management staff are distributed across functions including the Virtual Contact Center, document processing, and returned mail.

In April and May, contracted staff played a central role in addressing a significant backlog of returned mail. This targeted effort was essential to ensuring client contact information was accurate and that communication related to eligibility and benefits could be reliably delivered.

The Division actively monitors contract performance and ensures all work aligns with program standards and federal and state expectations.

See Attachment 6: Distribution and Status of Contracted Staff – May 2025

E.   Training and Development

The Division continues to deliver a robust statewide training program to ensure that new staff are fully prepared to meet eligibility determination responsibilities across multiple public assistance programs. The most recent cohort of Modified Adjusted Gross Income Medicaid and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program training concluded on May 9, 2025. This ten-week training program consisted of virtual instructor-led sessions paired with structured on-the-job learning. Moving forward, the Division plans to shift from virtual to in-person, field office-based training to the greatest extent possible. This model is expected to improve learner engagement and enhance the retention of policy and systems knowledge.

In June 2025, field supervisors and office managers will participate in a leadership academy facilitated by contractors from the Change and Innovation Agency. This training will focus on building supervisory skills, enhancing understanding of the CURRENT workload management system, and strengthening the capacity of frontline leadership.

Additionally, select staff assigned to the workload team will attend a one-day process mapping session. This event will provide a structured opportunity to evaluate existing processes and identify opportunities for workflow improvements.

See Attachment 7: Training

IV.   Efforts to Streamline Administration of Programs

The Division of Public Assistance made several updates to the Workload Management Matrix this month to reflect both operational milestones and clarifications to existing initiatives. Most updates are non-substantive and aimed at improving clarity,

documenting implementation progress, or updating the timeline and scope of ongoing efforts.

The Business Process Reengineering (BPR) section has been revised to more clearly outline the scope of work with Change and Innovation Agency (C!A), including finalized training and staffing recommendations and continued evaluation of policy operations for process redesign opportunities. Similarly, the Elderly Simplified Application Project (ESAP) entry was amended for clarity and now succinctly describes certification timeframes and interview requirements.

The most significant implementation milestone this month is the full launch of automated agency delay notices for SNAP and Adult Public Assistance (APA) cases. As of April 30, 2025, the system now issues notifications for all newly overdue cases on a daily basis. This completes the phased rollout that began in March and is reflected in the updated status of this activity.

Non-substantive clarifications were made to describe expanded access to online forms through MyAlaska, including the Change Report Form; and to confirm that all Division offices are now offering same-day service interviews, with some service limitations in rural offices due to staffing.

The matrix was also updated to reflect Phase 1 completion of intelligent scanning capabilities under the Advance Capture initiative, and to reaffirm that Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility (BBCE) is on schedule for implementation July 1, 2025. Supporting system changes are expected to be complete by May 31, 2025, with training and public communications planned for June.

Additional updates document scheduling for interview reminders via text under the e-notices initiative; confirm Alaska's placement in the national rollout of the National Accuracy Clearinghouse (NAC); and note a shift from considering to planning implementation of third-party identity verification, as part of Alaska's Quality Control investment strategy. Alaska also plans to move forward with modernizing SNAP notices independently of the new eligibility system, removing longstanding formatting constraints imposed by the legacy platform.

To improve usability, the Division has also color-coded each item in the matrix according to its implementation status.

These updates reflect the Division's continued progress toward operational modernization and compliance with federal and court-ordered expectations.

See Attachment 2: Workload Management Matrix.

V. Conclusion

In June 2025, the Division of Public Assistance continues to strengthen its capacity to meet program obligations and address application processing delays. Training delivery shifted toward more effective, field-based instruction; leadership development initiatives were launched; and technology investments advanced key modernization goals.

The Division remains committed to achieving timely and accurate processing for SNAP and APA benefits and fulfilling its responsibilities under the Court's order. Continued updates will reflect progress toward those goals and highlight the Division's efforts to ensure sustainable improvements across public assistance programs.